

REMARKS

Claims 46, 52, 57, 62, 67, 72, and 91-101 are pending in this application. In light of the submissions and remarks made herein, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 91-93 and 95-101 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Chui et al.* (USP 6,229,926). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In response to the Examiner's rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over the *Chui et al.* reference, Applicants are filing concurrently herewith verified translations of the three (3) priority documents to establish an effective filing date of at least June 17, 1998, which is prior to the July 24, 1998 filing date of the provisional application, to which the *Chui et al.* reference refers. As such, Applicants respectfully submit that the *Chui et al.* reference does not qualify as prior art and its removal as a reference obviates these rejections.

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing the pending claims in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully

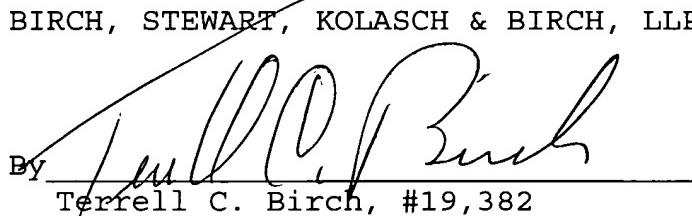
requested to contact Catherine M. Voisinet (Reg. No. 52,327) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Applicants respectfully petition for a two (2) month extension of time pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a). A check in the amount of \$420.00 in payment of the extension of time fee is attached.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
Terrell C. Birch, #19,382


TCB/CMV/jdm
1907-0190P

P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

Attachments: Verified translations of Japanese priority documents
JP 9-254616, JP 10-018782, and JP 10-169456